

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954

FF52 Nupe FF52

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7. Ndduma sacrifice on the Niger

[42]



6. Žiba sacrifice

[p. 38 (6)]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52



21. The dance of the *ndakó gboyá*

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20. A noted medicine expert and 'wise man' from
Jebba

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[p. 134 (40)]

CULTURAL FEATURES AND THE LIFE CYCLE

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: TRIBAL MARKS: DETSS

- 142 While the aboriginal Nupe sub-tribes (Ebe, Beni, Ebagi, and Bataci) are negro in appearance, there are indications of considerable non-negro elements in their ancestry. A striking type with oval face, high cheekbones, and slightly mongoloid eyes is often found among those of mixed Fulani descent.
- 181 The Nupe are known all over Nigeria as an industrious and formerly warlike people. They are progressive and anxious to try new methods, e.g., in agriculture. The women are keen and successful traders.
- 634 There are no facial marks common to the Nupe people as a whole, but sub-tribes are distinguished to some extent. Many sub-tribes have to-day adopted "Bida" marks in addition to their own.
- 291 Commoners wear a loincloth, with a blue cloth thrown over the shoulder and
- 555 the blue phrygian cap, said to be the traditional headgear of the Nupe. Nobles and other well-to-do men wear trousers and a flowing white robe and turban.¹

BIRTH

- 843 The rituals surrounding childbirth begin at the time of conception and culminate in the naming ceremony. As soon as the pregnancy becomes noticeable (generally in the third to the fifth month) the parents must discontinue sexual relations and the mother must avoid places inhabited by spirits and abstain from eating certain foods which are thought to have a harmful effect on the unborn child. Special rules or avoidances may be prescribed by the diviner whom the father will consult immediately, and again at the beginning of the confinement and before the naming ceremony.
- 844 The father keeps away during the actual birth, his elder sister, mother, or other kinswoman assisting the mother, and his father or father's brother cutting the
- 851 umbilical cord and disposing of the afterbirth, which is buried outside the hut. Thereafter the child's paternal grandfather plays a more important part than the father, announcing the birth of his grandchild and receiving congratulations.
- 553 The naming ceremony (*suna*) usually takes place eight days after the birth.
- 852 It is traditionally preceded, on the seventh day, by a libation of beer to the ancestor thought to be reborn in the child. The name used always to be announced by the child's grandfather before a group of relatives, without any particular ceremonial. To-day, however, with the spread of Islam, the announcement is usually made by a mallam. It is at this time also that the child's hair is cut and the tribal marks scratched on the cheeks and forehead.²
- 845 Twins are generally welcomed, but infants born with teeth are regarded as a bad omen.³

CIRCUMCISION

- 304 Circumcision (*sug'ba*) is universal, but it does not appear to be regarded as one of the more important rituals. It is performed on boys individually between the ages of 8 and 11, whenever the father thinks fit, by a barber, who is usually paid sixpence or a shilling. Women must be away from the house when it is done, otherwise there is no ceremonial.⁴

No corresponding ceremony is reported for girls.

¹ Nadel, op cit., pp. 25, 237, 362, 405-6 (sketches of tribal marks); Meek, 1, 1925, pp. 28-9; Line, 1947.

² Nadel, 1954a, pp. 115-16.

³ Nadel, personal communication; Malam Aliyu Bida, Ms. Notes.

⁴ Nadel, op cit., p. 118.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12

Tiv FF57

Hausa MS12

Fulani MS11

Kanuri MS14

Nupe FF52

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FIG. 11—Hausa villagers, Zaria Province. The Hausa are numerically the major tribal group in the Region; racially, they show a predominance of savanna Negro elements.

FIG. 12—A pagan hamlet of the Jos Plateau. These primitive people appear to have some Negrito elements.

FIG. 13—Nupe villagers, Niger Province. This group from one small village reflects racial complexity of parts of the Region—all savanna Negro, sticky forest Negro, and persons of Ash descent.

FIG. 14—Tiv of Benue Province. The Tiv, predominant people of the Middle Belt, appear to have racial affinities with the peoples of the southeastern forest rather than with the peoples of the northern plains.

FIG. 15—A Kanuri of Bornu Province. The Kanuri are a hybrid group, of mixed Negro-Caucasian origin.

FIG. 16—Fulani of the Bauchi region. Fulani ancestry is Caucasian, reflected in brown skin, wavy hair, and narrow nose. Today they show marks of intermarriage with Negro neighbors.

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144 RACIAL AFFINITIES--indicated affiliation with established races and sub-races; supporting evidence; extent of race mixture; etc. See also:

Distribution of ethnic groups	102	Ideas about race	920
Ethnic stratification and status of racial hybrids	563		

197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna
 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans
 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide*
 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of
 144 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh-
 302 bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways.
 161 There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censused.

441 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge
 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death
 672 of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

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